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ABSTRACT

This series of 22 pamphlets, on a range of reading topics, presents instructional techniques for teaching reading in elementary schools. Each pamphlet provides a brief summary of the topic presented, as well as classroom activities. The following topics are covered: (1) Early Literacy; (2) Writing in the Reading Program; (3) Reading and the Principal; (4) Storytelling in the Reading Program; (5) Critical Reading/Thinking in the Classroom; (6) Vocabulary Development I; (7) Vocabulary Development II; (8) Reading Aloud in the Classroom; (9) Students' Oral and Silent Reading in the Classroom; (10) Creative Book Reports; (11) Components of a Comprehensive Reading Program; (12) Reading and the Non-English Speaking Student; (13) Informal Diagnosis of Reading Problems in the Classroom; (14) Components of a Comprehensive Reading Lesson; (15) Games in the Reading Program; (16) Creative Alternatives to Ditto Sheets; (17) Reading in the Content Areas; (18) Reading Comprehension I--Study Techniques; (19) Reading Comprehension II--Semantic and Story Mapping; (20) Reading Comprehension III--Discussion and Questioning Techniques; (21) Worksheet Selection Tips; and (22) How to Include Parents in the Reading Program. (MM)

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SPOTLIGHT ON READING

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Early Literacy

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
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Instructional Techniques
Classroom Activities

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Reading is a vital basic skill that needs to be mastered if a good foundation for success in school and life pursuits is to be constructed. In today's complex society, it is imperative that adults be literate in order to function and to enable them to meet the challenges of the future. Reading is all around a child, in the home, in the school, and in the environment. He is exposed to reading at a very early age, however, formal reading instruction usually does not begin until he enters school. Educators should strive to make the acquisition of reading skills interesting, relevant, and enjoyable for all students. Reading improvement, like education in general, is a continuous lifelong pursuit. The various topics in the "Spotlight on Reading" series will be useful to you in the classroom as the goal to make all students successful avid lifelong readers is realized.

Early Literacy

Early literacy is a continuing process that begins with a child's first experiences in listening to sounds and rhythms, and develops as the child increasingly encounters symbols and society.[1]

Formal education begins when a child enters the classroom for the first time, but a child is never too young to learn. Parents are the first teachers of children and help establish attitudes for learning and standards for achievement that will carry over to the classroom.

Parents assist their children during the preschool years in many ways, including setting aside a family reading time each day, talking and listening to each other, broadening their children's experiences by visiting rich resources ranging from shopping centers to museums, helping their children have a good self-image, ensuring proper health habits, and providing opportunities for physical development.

Kindergarten is the foundation upon which all future education is built. It is filled with a variety of learning activities that help children grow socially, emotionally, physically, and intellectually.

Cognitive and psychomotor skills are generally taught in formal settings. These include direct instruction in areas such as left to right progression and recognizing upper and lowercase letters.

While there is a variance of philosophies and goals in different school systems, there tends to be agreement on the following developmental skills that could be included in a kindergarten program.

Gross Motor Skills: walks a balance beam; hops on one foot; skips, jumps, throws, catches, or kicks a ball

Fine Motor: uses scissors, pencils, and crayons with control; prints name; forms letters; buttons, zips, ties, and snaps clothing

Language Arts: speaks clearly, speaks in complete sentences, contributes to group discussions, applies basic language concepts

Personal Information: knows own name, parents' names, address, and telephone number

Colors and Shapes: recognizes eight basic colors (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple (violet), brown, black); names and reproduces circle, square, triangle, and rectangle

Mathematics: counts objects 1-10; matches number to objects; recognizes and writes numerals 0-10; sequences objects in a pattern; knows ordinals; knows number after, before, and between; names penny, nickel, and dime

Reading: recognizes upper and lowercase letters, associates letter forms and sounds, says alphabet in sequence, hears rhyming words, puts events in sequence, follows left to right progression, recognizes name in print, and classifies objects and pictures.

The following are suggestions and activities that will help the young student in the early stages of acquiring literacy.

Have students dictate stories to the classroom assistant or older students. The students can also illustrate their own stories.

Encourage students to discuss stories that you have read aloud to the class.

Prepare preformed letters and place them at a learning center. The student can practice spelling simple words by manipulating the letters.

Provide opportunities for the students to write or dictate words or sentences to explain selected pictures.

Use the student's interest and knowledge of environmental print as the basis for teaching letter-sound correspondences. For example, the letter "s" can be taught by using a small replica of a stop sign, a container of salt, with the words prominently displayed by the object.

Help the students write their own predictable books.

Show the class wordless books and have students volunteer to tell a story about the pictures. This is a good activity to enhance oral language fluency.

Ensure that students have opportunities for play in a planned and organized program.

Give students time to participate in effective "show and tell" activities.

Furnish students opportunities to listen and to respond to presentations.

Read to students.

Provide daily opportunities for students to use books.

Help parents have access to books that they can read to their children.

Present a program for parents to acquaint them with ways to help their children including suggestions for reading to children, providing a proper diet and rest, and spending quality time with them.

Utilize the media center for storytelling and other language activities.

Provide experiences for students to learn to recognize upper- and lower-case letters.

Help students learn to associate letter forms with their most frequent sounds.

A child entering kindergarten is beginning the important part of life that provides the direction that will, to a large extent, determine the results obtained from the years spent in school. Therefore, it is of vital importance that the best possible kindergarten program be provided in every school for Indiana children.

[1]Reference: Beardsley, Linda and Miream Marecek-Zeman, "Making Connections, Facilitating Literacy in Young Children," *Childhood Education,* February 1987, (Not an exact quote).

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SPOTLIGHT ON READING

Writing in the Reading Program

Instructional Techniques
Classroom Activities

Reading is a vital basic skill that needs to be mastered if a good foundation for success in school and life pursuits is to be constructed. In today's complex society, it is imperative that adults be literate in order to function and to enable them to meet the challenges of the future. Reading is all around a child, in the home, in the school, and in the environment. He is exposed to reading at a very early age, however, formal reading instruction usually does not begin until he enters school. Educators should strive to make the acquisition of reading skills interesting, relevant, and enjoyable for all students. Reading improvement, like education in general, is a continuous lifelong pursuit. The various topics in the "Spotlight on Reading" series will be useful to you in the classroom as the goal to make all students successful avid lifelong readers is realized.

Writing in the Reading Program

Young children from literate homes will pretend to write when given access to paper and pencils. These young writers will often "read" their messages when asked what they have written. From very early in a child's experience, writing and reading are linked. Because both writing and reading have their basis in language, experiences with one can help strengthen the other. A reader, for example, learns not only story structure and vocabulary, but the whole world of ideas and information is opened through reading. That same reader then tries to express his ideas and information through the writing process. By attempting to write for a real audience, the reader/writer discovers the utility of spelling and punctuation for conveying meaning. Writers who are also readers have the experience of seeing how other authors solved such problems as expressing conversations or indicating shifts in topics. To be most effective, reading and writing experiences need to be integrated for all students.

Reading and Writing Classroom Activities

Classroom teachers can provide many opportunities for integrated reading/writing activities. The following ideas take very little teacher preparation other than an awareness of how one type of activity can be a catalyst for another.

- Use predictable children's stories as patterns for new stories. *The Very Hungry Caterpillar,* for example, could become *The Very Hungry Puppy.*

- Have students write their favorite story for a preschool-aged

child and tape record it for use in the kindergartens. A variation of that is to have the students write about their favorite memory from an earlier grade, tape record it, and send it to that previous teacher.

Teach the students to have *written* conversations as though they were characters from a story or people from history. One student, for example, could be Laura and the other Mary from the *Little House in the Big Woods* series as they realize that their little sister is missing, even though they were supposed to be watching her. Then the students can act out their written conversations as though they were acting out a play.

Save sets of students' writings from previous years, block out the names, and then have the students become the teachers, sorting the papers into stacks labeled in range from most effective to least effective. Have the students describe the characteristics of the papers that caused them to label them as they have. Then have the students write the same assignment, trying to make their papers as good as (or better than) the most effective papers from the previous class.

Take old workbooks or discarded textbooks, cut out enough of the better stories for a small group. Instead of giving each child the whole story, cut the endings of the stories at different places. One child may receive only the first paragraph of the story. Another might receive the first page of the story. Another might receive all but the last page of the story. Have the children read through their stories and then write a possible ending to the story as they know it. Then have children share their new stories starting with the child who had the shortest segment and ending with the child who had the longest segment. The children will learn about story structure through this reading/writing activity.

Have students make a list of 10 characters from their reading that are basically "good guys." Number their choices one through 10. Then have them make a list of 10 typical problems faced by the main characters in the stories. Number those choices. Then have students write down the last three numbers of their phone number. These numbers will determine which "good guy," villain, and problem they must incorporate into their own story.

Use construction paper, cardboard, folders, or contact paper-covered notebooks as covers for students finished stories and essays. Keep those student-made books as part of the classroom library. Read the student-made books to the class in addition to library books to show the students that you value them as authors.

Give students time to read and react to each others' compositions as they move from rough draft to final draft. Students can see

alternative ways of handling the same assignment.

When your class discovers a favorite author, read a series of books or short stories by that author. Make predictions about the types of characters and problems that the author will deal with in a new selection. When the students feel they are "experts" on an author, let them write something in that author's style.

Introduce your students to series such as *Twist-a-Plot* or *Choose Your Own Adventures*. When students are familiar with the structure of such series, challenge them to write their own stories with multiple endings. (There are computer programs available to help you structure such student-authored books.)

Good classroom teachers will find many other ways to link reading and writing so that one is the natural extension of the other. If reading experiences inspire writing experiences, and writing experiences inspire reading experiences, teachers will be successful in maintaining the reading/writing connection.

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The Principal and the Reading Program

The role of the principal in the reading program is vital to its success. The principal must provide strong, vigorous instructional leadership, display a positive attitude about reading, and view reading as a top curriculum priority. In schools where the principal and the staff have high expectations for students and a belief that all students can learn to read, student reading achievement tends to be higher. As a principal, take an active role in your school's reading program, be the catalyst who stimulates the desire to read in students. The following ideas and activities can be used to enhance the principal's role in reading instruction.

- Be knowledgeable of the reading process.

- Keep abreast of current reading content, methods, strategies, etc. in order to be able to make valid suggestions.

- Be cognizant of the needs of the reading program when making the school budget.

- Take an active role in helping to set the goals and objectives of the reading program.

- Encourage teachers to attend reading inservice workshops and conferences.

- Establish a reading committee for your school. This committee can evaluate new materials and discuss various aspects of the reading program.

- Visit each classroom and be an active participant in the reading lesson.

- Model the joy of reading by giving the students the opportunity to observe you reading books, newspapers, etc.

- Invite students to your office to hear them read either in small groups or individually.

- Involve parents in their children's reading endeavors.

- Send home with students reading progress reports of special reading achievement certificates or notes.

- Use reading incentive programs to promote reading and parent involvement.

- Encourage your teachers to read aloud each day to their classes.

- Have a silent reading period each day. All staff members and students take this time to read books of their choice.

- Use the skills and expertise of your school librarian or media specialist.

- Listen carefully to your teachers' comments about the reading program.

- Solicit suggestions from the teaching staff and parents regarding reading program improvements or additions.

- Create a Parents' Library Corner in your school. Students can observe parents reading relevant materials concerning child care, education, etc.

- Begin a Principal's Reading Club. This could reward students for a certain amount of books read or general reading improvements.

An effective principal must be the instructional leader in the school and hold the belief that all children can learn to read. This view will permeate through the staff and students. Strive to have a school where students enjoy reading and where students read well.

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SPOTLIGHT ON READING

Storytelling in the Reading Program

Instructional Techniques
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Storytelling in the Reading Program

Teachers who are willing to use the age-old technique of storytelling as an integral part of the reading program are in for a real treat, and good results as well. Looking into the faces of one's students and beginning, "Once upon a time," has a magic so simple and so powerful that it is a wonder that storytelling is not used more often.

What comes after "Once upon a time?" *Any* story that the teacher likes and can present with enthusiasm. Telling a story is a natural, joyful, human activity. It need not be a memorized presentation of literary material, but rather a simple retelling in one's own words of a familiar folktale, or a telling of an incident in one's life or from one's family traditions. After overcoming an initial hesitancy about storytelling, a teacher is often amazed at how simple it is, and how strongly and positively students respond.

There are many ways that stories can be used to enrich the reading curriculum, and to motivate students to read. The following are ideas to use in the classroom.

- Tell a story that students are to read later. Far from being bored with the repetition, young students enjoy the familiarity and the predictability of a known story. If there are discrepancies between what the teacher tells, and what the book says, they will enjoy catching the teacher at a "mistake."

- Teach students a chant or rhyme that comes up several times in the story, so that they can participate actively in the telling. Students will be able to read the chant or refrain easily, and they will love the participation.

- Allow students to make up their own stories. If possible, let them dictate their stories to a parent volunteer. Seeing one's own words in print can be a powerful motivator.

- Tell short dramatic incidents from history or a biography. Some students respond more positively to realism than to fantasy.

- Tell a true story from your own experience in order to create personal interest in material that might otherwise seem remote or irrelevant to students.

- Tell a different version of a story that the students know well. Have a class discussion about the differences. Each student or small groups of students can write a new version of an old story.

- Provide opportunities for students to tell stories.

- Arrange for your students to tell stories to other classes in the school.

- Form a storytelling club in your school for students and teachers. The club could meet during the lunch period or after school to share stories.

- Play storytelling records for your students on certain days in place of oral reading time.

Hearing a teacher tell stories is important in many ways: it allows students to hear the pronunciation of words far beyond their active vocabularies; it attunes them to the rhythm and flow of language; it familiarizes them with the great themes of literature; it gives them something to "tell" at home. Participating in the kinds of experiences listed here that are both exciting and deeply satisfying can be crucial to the student's enjoyment of reading. The students are motivated to learn the skills of reading because they yearn to read. Students often emerge from school as persons who not only "can" read, but do read — and that's a difference worth pursuing.

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Critical Reading/Thinking

Teaching children to read and think critically are goals all teachers have in common in all curricular areas. Too often, students are not given the time to develop these important skills. It is difficult to teach students to think critically if they are overly concerned about giving "the right answer." Many educators believe children are learning to read, but not learning to think critically or effectively. Critical reading and thinking cannot be left to chance for the development. They need to be actively taught and incorporated into the daily curriculum and started at an early age. Even young children can make critical decisions about reading materials as long as the content relates to their schema experience background. If students are to become effective readers and thinkers, they need to react and relate to and interact with what is being read.

Critical Reading Skills

- Differentiating fact and opinion
- Detecting propaganda and bias
- Forming generalizations
- Determining author's point of view
- Evaluating reliability and creditability of the author
- Identifying unstated assumptions

- Recognizing accuracy of data
- Determining validity of material
- Drawing conclusions
- Summarizing material read

The following technique and activities will help your students develop critical thinking and reading skills.

Teaching Techniques

- Increase class discussion. Students need to have time to share ideas and react to each others viewpoints.
- Develop questioning techniques which provide opportunities for students to evaluate the material. Questions should stimulate the students to think beyond the printed word. (Give the students enough "wait time" before responding to a question. Students should be given around 25 seconds before answering a question.)
- Use a good question taxonomy when formulating questions. Avoid asking all factual recall questions. The higher level questions help the students to develop critical thinking skills.
- Motivate students to take a personal interest in the material. Various methods can be used to stimulate students' interest. To be a critical reader, the student needs to be an active and interested participant.
- Provide a supportive, open environment where the students feel free to ask questions and explore alternative views.
- Encourage students to explain their answers. Give them opportunities to elaborate on their answers and explain their reasoning.
- Encourage students to take an opposing viewpoint when an issue is being discussed. Students understand better when they assume the other person's role.
- Help students to ask questions about the material and of each other. (The ReQuest and InQuest procedures are easy to use.)

Activities

- Compare news articles that are written about the same topic,

but by different authors.

- Discuss an editorial that has appeared in the local newspaper. Encourage students to present differing viewpoints.

- Evaluate commercials by determining what words the advertiser uses to persuade the consumer to buy the products.

- Identify words in a passage from a novel which develops the atmosphere the author is trying to create.

- Have students read several biographies about a person and compare the different interpretations of the person's life.

- Analyze with the students an art form, such as a picture, pottery, or a statue. Allow students to talk about the artist and discuss what they think the artist was trying to say, what feeling or mood is perceived.

- Read a short descriptive paragraph or story to the students. Encourage them to discuss how it makes them feel. Have them draw a picture using only colors that reflect the mood of the story.

- Write cause and effect sentences on the chalkboard such as, "After the heavy rain, the river flooded the town." Have the students copy the sentences on paper and direct them to draw a green line under the cause and a red line under the effect. Sentences can also be dictated to the students for them to write on paper.

- Read a story to the class and then encourage the students to write different endings to the story.

As students learn to read beyond the basic facts of a story and begin to understand and appreciate every aspect of a story or article; the author's mood, character's motivation, etc., they have become critical readers. Critical readers become critical thinkers and critical thinkers become successful students and citizens.

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SPOTLIGHT ON READING

Vocabulary Development I

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Vocabulary Development I

There is no doubt that a good reader possesses a rich vocabulary. A good reader knows many words and what they mean. A good reader is a word collector. Thus, the acquisition of vocabulary skills is an important facet of the reading process. Vocabulary development is essential in understanding concepts and comprehending verbal and written material. It is influenced by general cultural background, travel, reading, motivation, and direct instruction. Vocabulary development should be encouraged constantly as a means of increasing comprehension and fluency. A teacher must be continuously attuned to its importance and must emphasize the development of students' vocabularies. This development must be systematic and organized to be effective.

The following suggestions will help you enhance students' vocabulary development:

- Concrete experiences gained from field trips and excursions provide opportunities for words to be associated with real situations and to become vivid and clear.

- Sometimes it is not feasible to take field trips or excursions. Much can also be learned through vicarious experiences. Films, filmstrips, television, pictures, and charts can all be used to present new vocabulary.

- Within the classroom and its daily routine, social experiences such as "show and tell" period, daily news events time, committee work sessions, free conversation periods, and general class discussion can be utilized to broaden students' vocabularies.

- Vocabulary notebooks. Students can keep a vocabulary notebook appropriate to a specific grade level and/or subject area. Students can categorize words to meet their needs for creative writing and use in everyday written assignments. Some of the word lists may be categorized as:

  - New words heard in conversation or discussion
  - Words that describe feelings
  - Substitute words for overworked or overused words, such as "nice," "good," etc.
  - Effective words heard over the radio/television

- Word a day or word a week. The teacher selects a new word and tells it to the class at the beginning of the day or week. The teacher uses the word as often as possible during the day or week. The students listen for the word, and, at the end of the day or week, tell how many times the teacher used the word.

- Provide a wide range of materials for the students to read in the classroom. Books are great sources for vocabulary growth, especially those books that provoke questions and lead to discussion.

- Choral reading provides children with opportunities for developing good speaking habits and enriching their vocabularies.

There are several categories of word development including the use of context clues; study of synonyms, antonyms, and homonyms; and understanding the structural analysis of words. Introducing new words in context is a very effective technique to use. The following activities and techniques will aid you in helping students broaden their vocabularies:

Context Clues

- *Pictorial clues* — when introducing a new word, show a picture illustrating that word to the class.

- Select some comics in which a key word can be underlined in the sentence. The meaning of the key word is illustrated by the comic picture.

- Have students draw or find pictures to demonstrate the difference in meaning of words that are spelled alike, but have several meanings (e.g., "fair," "bar," or "band").

- *Concrete Clues* — the teacher will ask a student to demonstrate the meaning of a new term used in a sentence.

- Have students classify words into categories. Some of the categories might include color words, holiday words, action words, words to describe feelings, words for transportation, size words, words for how people look, etc.

- *Abstract Clues* — Divide the students into teams. The first person on each team says a word: "red." The next person in line adds a word: "redbird." Next person: "birdhouse." Next: "houseboat." etc. If one team cannot build a meaningful compound word from the preceding word, the other team wins.

Synonyms, Antonyms, Homonyms

- Have students practice using a thesaurus by finding synonyms for certain words — "See how many synonyms you can find for the word fast." "How many for fun?"

- Have students complete analogies, such as "*hot* is to *cold* as *wet* is to *dry*." etc.

- Form two teams. The teacher pronounces a word that is a homonym. A member of the first team writes both spellings of the word on the chalkboard, and the team uses each in a sentence. If the spelling and the sentence use are correct, the team scores a point. Continue with another word for the second team, etc. The team scoring the most points wins.

- Primary students might enjoy drawing illustrations of a pair of homonyms. Draw a rabbit as a hare and a little girl with braids for hair.

Word Parts

- Match games, such as Fish, Rummy, or various board games, can be used to teach word parts.

- Print several prefixes (un-, re-, pre-, etc.) and root words (ha[illegible]y, clean, etc.) on three by five cards. Each player tries to make as ma[illegible] words as possible by matching a prefix and a root word. To ensur[illegible] meaning, ask the students to give examples using each word in a sentence. The same type of activity could be used with suffixes.

Most educators will agree that vocabulary competence is an important factor in a student's academic success. Continued vocabulary development helps students read with meaning and express ideas with clarity and precision.

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SPOTLIGHT ON READING

Reading is a vital basic skill that needs to be mastered if a good foundation for success in school and life pursuits is to be constructed. In today's complex society, it is imperative that adults be literate in order to function and to enable them to meet the challenges of the future. Reading is all around a child, in the home, in the school, and in the environment. He is exposed to reading at a very early age, however, formal reading instruction usually does not begin until he enters school. Educators should strive to make the acquisition of reading skills interesting, relevant, and enjoyable for all students. Reading improvement, like education in general, is a continuous lifelong pursuit. The various topics in the "Spotlight on Reading" series will be useful to you in the classroom as the goal to make all students successful avid lifelong readers is realized.

Vocabulary Development II

The development of a person's vocabulary begins while yet an infant. When parents talk with their children, they learn that objects and concepts have labels (words) which identify them. Vocabulary is acquired through language, both oral and written. During the elementary school years, formal instruction in vocabulary development begins and continues through the college years. When does vocabulary acquisition end? Never. It is a lifelong pursuit. In everyday life situations, the need to know the definition and usage of new words is a continuous process.

As a teacher, you can help students view this process as an exciting challenge by instilling in them a curiosity about words and their meanings, origins, etc. A good vocabulary will lead a student to becoming a better reader and writer. In the *Vocabulary Development I* pamphlet, various ways of acquiring and teaching vocabulary words were discussed. The following techniques and activities offer additional help in attaining your goal of enriching all students' vocabulary.

- Put the words on the board and have students conduct a word hunt in the text. When a student finds the word, she raises her hand. When called upon, she reads the word in context and gives a definition of the term. The teacher then proceeds to build concepts around the word.

- Sentences from the text, putting the words in context, can be projected on the overhead. Volunteers read the sentence and define the word. Concepts are discussed.

- Words can be listed on the board or overhead. Students are

asked to demonstrate what word attack skills would help them pronounce the words (syllabication, phonic pronunciation, roots, prefixes, suffixes). Discussion of meaning follows, and reference is made to other words with similar word parts.

- Print polysyllabic words on the chalkboard, and ask students to help you divide them into syllables. Do not be concerned about doing it "wrong"; your goal is to approximate the number of sounds in the word, not to syllabicate the word exactly the way the dictionary does it.

- New words or phrases may be passed out on index cards to students in a small group. The student is asked to read the word and use it in a sentence. Others are asked to explain the concept the word presents, if applicable, or give another example of its use.

- The dictionary becomes a more attractive tool for reading when the children look up only one or two words at a time.

- Once a new term is introduced, be sure it is reviewed often, and that students are given an opportunity to use the word in speaking or in writing.

- Be consistent in the use of terms in the classroom when several could be used interchangeably. Find opportunities to use the vocabulary of your subject to reinforce the learning of terms.

- Use labels on models, pictures, or other visual aids on bulletin boards, mobiles, etc. to reinforce understanding of terminology.

- Have students construct vocabulary index cards. The word, abbreviation, or symbol is printed on one side (underlined in a sentence) and the definition is printed on the other side. These can be used for short drill sessions at the end of the class period with students working in pairs. The definitions should be written in the students' words.

- Do not limit yourself to previewing words only; also use phrases or direct quotations whose meaning is complicated by the vocabulary used or the sentence structure.

- Maintain a vocabulary bulletin board section. Encourage students' contributions to help illustrate word meanings. The teacher may post large cards with particular words for the unit under study. Students are challenged to devise different pictures or other methods to illustrate the term.

- Choose the same number of vocabulary words as there are front-

to-back rows of seats in your class. Write only the definition of the words on separate cards. Give one card to the first person in each row. This student, at a signal, whispers the definition to the person behind him/her who whispers it to the one behind him/her, and so forth, until the last person in each row has received the definition. The teacher calls on each one in turn to tell the definition which was heard. When the student gives the definition, the first person in the row tells the original definition, and they are compared for accuracy. The team is then asked to identify the word defined. If the last person gives the definition incorrectly phrased, a parallel can be drawn to reading experiences in which careless reading can yield incorrect ideas.

- To determine student strengths and weaknesses, give them a list of the unit vocabulary before beginning the unit. Have the students check the words they know they can define. This will give the teacher a picture of the known and unknown words for the unit. These papers can be kept by the teacher and handed back at the end of the unit so the student can underline the new words learned. Words which are not checked or underlined would indicate words that need reteaching before proceeding to a new unit. The students must realize that it is important to check or underline those terms they understand and to leave any term they have any doubts about.

Remember, learning new words should be fun and exciting for the students. By using different techniques and activities that motivate the students to learn new words, the love of words will be developed and they will come to understand that word power can make them more confident in all life situations.

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SPOTLIGHT ON READING

Reading Aloud in the Classroom

Instructional Techniques
Classroom Activities

Reading is a vital basic skill that needs to be mastered if a good foundation for success in school and life pursuits is to be constructed. In today's complex society, it is imperative that adults be literate in order to function and to enable them to meet the challenges of the future. Reading is all around a child, in the home, in the school, and in the environment. He is exposed to reading at a very early age, however, formal reading instruction usually does not begin until he enters school. Educators should strive to make the acquisition of reading skills interesting, relevant, and enjoyable for all students. Reading improvement, like education in general, is a continuous lifelong pursuit. The various topics in the "Spotlight on Reading" series will be useful to you in the classroom as the goal to make all students successful avid lifelong readers is realized.

Reading Aloud in the Classroom

"Please read us one more chapter. We'll be good — we'll work hard — we promise."

You will hear this refrain if you read to your students — regardless of their age. Everyone likes to be read to when hearing something one loves. When you read to your students, you are providing them with more than an excuse to get out of work, you are:

- sharing your love of reading
- exposing them to the literature of their language
- modeling the characteristics of a good reader
- helping them become better listeners
- giving them glimpses of their own and other cultures
- developing their imaginations
- aiding their discovery of themselves and their place in the world

In other words, you are covering the curriculum.

"Read aloud three things everyday —
a favorite story,
a favorite poem,
and student-authored work."

— Jacque Wuertenberg

Favorite Stories

"We read to find mirrors of ourselves."

— Leland Jacobs

Here are some stories that reflect our lives in a joyous light. Each author has a collection worthy of investigation.

Picture Books

Miss Nelson is Missing, Harry Allard and James Marshall
Guess Who My Favorite Person Is, Byrd Baylor
The Day Jimmy's Boa Ate The Wash, Trinka Noble & S. Kellogg
Leo, The Late Bloomer, Robert Kraus
Frederick, Leo Lionni
The Ghost Eye Tree, Bill Martin, Jr. & John Archambault
Just For You, Mercer Mayer
Amos and Boris, William Steig
Fast Friends, James Stevenson
Jumanji, Chris Van Allsburg
Rosie and Michael, Judith Viorst
Ira Sleeps Over, Bernard Waber
Humphrey's Bear, Jan Wahl
The Velveteen Rabbit, Margery Williams
Janey, Charlotte Zolotow

Chapter-by-Chapter

Tales of A Fourth Grade Nothing, Judy Blume
Dear Mr. Henshaw, Beverly Cleary
Bunnicula, James and Deborah Howe
A Ring of Endless Light, Madeleine L'Engle
The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe, C. S. Lewis
The Great Gilly Hopkins, Katherine Paterson
Soup and Me, Robert Newton Peck
Where the Red Fern Grows, Wilson Rawls
The Hobbit, J. R. R. Tolkien
Charlotte's Web, E. B. White

Favorite Poetry

"Poetry is memorable language."

— Leland Jacobs

Poetry. Whether you yawn, groan, or smile at its mention probably hinges on the way it was introduced and shared with you. To cultivate the more joyous responses from your students, start sharing a poem you love every day. Keep a file of relevant ones for each content unit and special time of the year. Here are some resources that will help you locate a host of memorable favorites.

Reflections on a Gift of Watermelon Pickle, Steven Dunning
Honey I Love, Eloise Greenfield
Go With A Poem, Lillian Moore
Blackberry Ink, Eve Merriam
The New Kid On The Block, Jack Prelutsky
Where the Sidewalk Ends & A Light in the Attic, S. Silverstein
A Box of Peppermints, Libby Stopple
If I Were in Charge of the World, Judith Viorst
Many Winters, Nancy Wood

Student-Authored Work

"Old folks write for pleasure's sake,
Children write for fame."

— Leland Jacobs

When you read aloud your students' writing, you are acknowledging them as authors. Thereby, they begin to see their work as an endeavor to be taken seriously. Some writers have difficulty getting started. We can teach them to look to other authors for workable patterns that can help convey original ideas. Reading can be a catalyst for writing.

READ:	*then WRITE:*
Charlotte Zolotow's *Someday* or *I Know a Lady*	your own wishes and dreams about an older person you love
James Stevenson's *When I Was Nine* or *Higher on the Door*	of a special time in your life, your parents', or your dog's about a family custom or quirk
Judith Viorst's *Rosie and Michael* or *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No-Good Very Bad Day*	about life with your best friend about your own kind of day
Ruth Kraus' *A Hole Is to Dig*	your own book of definitions

READ:	*then WRITE:*
Byrd Baylor's *Everybody Needs a Rock*	what you feel everyone needs and your own list of rules for finding it
Cooper Eden's *Remember The Night Rainbow*	your own resourceful solutions for impossible problems

Reading aloud to your students is one of the most important activities you can use in the classroom. Select a time of the day when you feel the student would benefit most from the oral reading. Schedule this time daily; make it a regular part of your curriculum. Students will look forward to this "special" time with great eagerness and leave the school in the evening thinking about their favorite part of the story or anticipating what will happen in the next chapter. In the words of Bill Martin, Jr., "The learning begins in the afterlife of the book."

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SPOTLIGHT ON READING

Reading is a vital basic skill that needs to be mastered if a good foundation for success in school and life pursuits is to be constructed. In today's complex society, it is imperative that adults be literate in order to function and to enable them to meet the challenges of the future. Reading is all around a child, in the *home, in the school, and in the environment. He is exposed to* reading at a very early age, however, formal reading instruction usually does not begin until he enters school. Educators should strive to make the acquisition of reading skills interesting, relevant, and enjoyable for all students. Reading improvement, like education in general, is a continuous lifelong pursuit. The various topics in the "Spotlight on Reading" series will be useful to you in the classroom as the goal to make all students successful avid lifelong readers is realized.

Students' Oral and Silent Reading in the Classroom

Oral and silent reading are important components of an effective reading program. When students are given opportunities to practice oral reading and to read independently for pleasure, their reading skills improve. Students enjoy reading aloud to their teacher, principal, and classmates. (See *Principal's Role in Reading Instruction* pamphlet.)

Many times the way oral reading is handled in the classroom may not be effective in guiding students to reach their optimal achievement level. Educators recommend that students read a selection silently before they read it aloud. Studies indicate that this practice improves oral reading fluency. Without this silent reading practice time, students often read slowly and without expression which in turn causes stress in some students. One of the most common oral reading practices used in the classroom is a format called "round robin reading." One problem with this format is that the quality of practice is poor and can hinder both fluency and comprehension. The following are alternatives for the "round robin" technique.

Alternatives for Round Robin Reading

- *Repeated reading* In repeated reading, the student rereads a selection or part of a passage until she reads the material quickly and smoothly. A passage can be divided into short (but meaningful) sections, with the student achieving fluency on one section before moving on to another. At the initial stages when the material is unfamiliar to students, a taped rendition (see below) can be used to

assist students.

- *Teacher-assisted reading and/or tape-assisted reading* In teacher-assisted reading, the teacher reads with the students. When the students begin to recognize certain words in the story, the teacher pauses and lets the students fill in the words. The students read and the teacher quickly fills in any they fail to recognize immediately.

In tape-assisted reading, the student is given a copy of the book and its accompanying tape. The student listens to the tape and reads along with it until she is able to read the book fluently without the tape.

- *Partner reading* Students work in pairs, with one student designated as the listener and the other the reader. By skimming the selection, the partners together designate a question to be answered from the reading. Students alternate, with one student reading a section and the other listening. After a student has finished her turn reading a section, the listener gives her response to the question. The reader verifies the response by referring back to the text.

- *Individuals reading within a group* When students read a section of a passage aloud to a small or large group, they should have a specific purpose for reading. For example, one activity would be for each student to locate the section of the passage that confirmed her prediction prior to reading. Students could take turns reading these sections aloud. While one student reads her section aloud, the other students would be listening, rather than following along in their books. Thus, students have a reason for reading aloud and a reason for listening.

- *Choral reading* Choral reading is characterized by students reading aloud in unison. This unison reading can be done in a variety of patterns. For example, small groups can alternate stanzas of a poem, or a large group can read a refrain, with a narrator reading the stanzas of a poem.

- *Readers' theater* Readers' theater is an oral reading activity in which a play is read. In other words, students do not memorize their parts nor do they perform the physical movements of characters. (Many books selections have been rewritten in a play format for a readers' theater production.)

Silent Reading

Silent reading time in the classroom has many benefits. Some benefits are:

- Students learn the value of children's literature.

- Students are provided with opportunities to escape into yesterday, dream of tomorrow, or just experience new adventures.

- Students are challenged to try new books, to investigate new areas of interest and to acquire more indepth information on specific subjects.

- Students learn personal discipline since independent reading necessitates responsibility and independence. Students must begin a book and stay on task to complete it.

- Students receive the message that reading is an important part of daily life.

Techniques and Activities

The following techniques and activities will aid you in developing a good silent reading period in your classroom:

- Motivate students to read by using incentive programs.***

- Read to your students every day. Select a wide range of literature such as poetry, history, myths, fantasy, etc. (See *Reading to Students* pamphlet.)

- Take your class on a field trip to the local library. Arrange for the children's librarian to tell them a story. (See *Storytelling in the Reading Program* pamphlet.)

- Establish a classroom library. Let your students have input when purchasing the books.

- Schedule at least a 15-minute period each day for independent reading.

- Provide students with time to make "creative book reports" if they desire. *This should not be required.* Students may, however, enjoy this activity for certain "favorite books." (See *Creative Book Reports* pamphlet.)

- Students can use various art materials such as yarn, paper mache, clay, etc. to create certain segments of a story.

- Students can construct puppets based on book characters.

Students not only need to be taught the skills of reading, but they also need to be taught the *Love* of reading. Through reading, students can develop a greater degree of imagination, creativity, and insight. A student who can imagine, create, and understand will have a headstart at being successful.

*The book, *A Compilation of Reading Incentive Programs*, is available by writing to the Indiana Department of Education, Office of School Assistance.

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SPOTLIGHT ON READING

Creative Book Reports

Instructional Techniques
Classroom Activities

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Creative Book Reports

Book reports have a legitimate place in a good reading program. They can be fun for students while serving as an evaluative technique for teachers. Book reports provide an opportunity for students to share books they have read and enjoyed with teachers, parents, and classmates. Students can be encouraged to use their creativity in completing book reports instead of exclusively using the traditional written style. The following ideas and activities will aid you in making book report assignments exciting and pleasurable for students.

- *Vote-A-Book* — Students write a short book report and present it orally to the class. After all reports are completed, the class votes on the Book of the Week or Book of the Month, etc. The book title along with the reader's name and comments make an excellent bulletin board attraction.

- *Individual Grow-Worms* — Each student makes a bookworm from construction paper and only the head and tail are displayed. When the student completes a book, a segment of the worm's body is added to the head and tail. Each body segment has the title, author, and a brief summary of the book read.

- *Class Grow-Worms* — A large bookworm can be placed on a bulletin board or on the wall surrounding the classroom. When a student completes a book, the book's title, author and a short review is written on a body segment for other students to read. One class can challenge another class to see who can complete the longest bookworm.

- *Oral Book Reports* — Students prepare oral book reports and present them in one of the following ways:

  - Dramatization — Students act out the story for classmates using self-made costumes and props, etc.

  - Puppets — Students make puppets of the story characters and then act out the story. A puppet stage can be constructed from a large cardboard box and plastic bags can serve as a stage curtain.

  - Papier-mache Heads — Students can use balloons as a base for papier-mache heads. Each head can be that of a central character from a story. A group of students can read the same book and each student selects a character to portray. The play can be presented for other classes and parents to enjoy.

- *Bookmark Reports* — Each student can make a bookmark from various materials and then a brief summary of the book read is written on the marker. The markers can be shaped like a character or an object in the book.

- *Class Code Book Reports* — The teacher and students or a group of students develop a class secret code. Each student uses the code to write a book report. All the reports are placed in a container and each student selects one to decode and read to the class.

- *Radio or Intercom Book Reports* — Students can select a favorite book and prepare a radio script to be read to classes over the school's intercom system. This can be a solo performance or other classmates can participate in the production.

- *Book Critics* — Students select new books from the school library and write book reviews for the school or class newspaper. If the school does not have a newspaper, a one page leaflet can be published by each classroom on a rotating basis and distributed to all students and parents.

- *Book Jacket Replacement* — Students can work with the school librarian to locate books that are missing cover jackets. Each student makes a new jacket for a selected book. In addition to the art and craft work on the cover, a brief summary of the story will be present. The summary should be written in a style to stimulate interest and motivate others to read the book.

- *Picture Reports* — Students select their favorite part of a book. Pictures from magazines, old readers, etc. that represent scenes or characters in the book are cut out and placed on a precut piece of tagboard measuring 11" x 18". Each report is placed on a bulletin board for other classmates to enjoy.

- *Overhead Projector Reports* — Students are given cellophane or plastic sheets measuring 10 1/2" x 8 1/2". Outlines of story characters or objects are drawn on the precut sheets with magic markers. Each student is given five minutes for his book report. The report is done by placing the prepared transparencies on the projector as the student tells the story in his own words.

- *Reviews on a Ring* — Precut cards measuring 5" x 3" are prepared for the students. Students write brief summaries of books read on the cards. The cards are put on a large metal ring and placed in the reading corner or library. Each ring can be on a special subject. Students refer to the cards when choosing books. Parents use them to select read-to books.

- *Nutty Books* — Students can draw a nutshell shape from tagboard and write a review for a silly nonsense book or a joke from a joke book. These nutshell shapes can be placed on a bulletin board for all to have fun with.

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SPOTLIGHT ON READING

A Comprehensive Reading Program

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A Comprehensive Reading Program

Learning to read is the most time-consuming and effort intensive activity which a pupil undertakes during the years spent in school. To facilitate each pupil's efforts, schools and teachers have to present a well planned and comprehensive program of reading instruction. An effective reading program must provide varied instruction and flexible requirements in order to accommodate the widely differing needs and abilities of students. A total reading program encompasses all school activities that promote reading. Since reading requires more than one ability, the reading program also must be complex. A comprehensive reading program must offer appropriate instruction in all related areas of reading: *developmental reading, corrective reading, remedial, functional, recreational,* and *clinical reading.*

- **Developmental reading** is designed to meet the needs of students who are making average or better than average progress in acquiring reading skills. It focuses upon the systematic, sequential development of reading skills and reading strategies. A balanced reading curriculum includes the following types of reading experiences within the developmental program:

  Word identification

  - Adequate sight vocabulary
  - Method of decoding unfamiliar words
  - Oral and silent reading ability with appropriate speed and fluency

Comprehension skills

- Vocabulary — sufficient and accurate reading vocabulary
- Literal Comprehension — understanding and recall of actual, stated facts
- Inferential Comprehension — determining meaning by reasoning and drawing conclusions
- Critical Reading — evaluating what is read in terms of individual experiences
- Creative Reading — learning from what is read to reach new ideas and conclusions

- **Functional Reading** is the application of reading skills to content area reading. It includes study skills, organization of information, and development of specific skills and vocabularies needed by special subjects.

- **Recreational Reading** is concerned with the desire to read, with encouraging and nurturing reading for pleasure and satisfaction. The goal is to develop an interest in and liking for reading as an enjoyable, leisure time activity.

- **Corrective Reading** involves frequent use of simple, short-term corrective procedures. It is carried on within the regular classroom, usually by the classroom teacher. The main purpose of corrective reading instruction is to prevent reading disabilities and failure.

- **Remedial and Clinical Reading** is provided outside the regular classroom by specialized personnel. An individual instructional plan is based on the needs of each student in an effort to assist severe reading disabilities.

Comprehensive and exemplary reading programs also are characterized by:

- Vigorous instructional leadership on the part of principals, teachers, and curriculum coordinators.

- Teachers and administrators who have high, but realistic, expectations about the progress that students will make in reading.

- School pride, collegiality, and a sense of community.

- An orderly environment.

- Practices that maximize the amount of uninterrupted time available for learning.

- Teachers who manage their classrooms in ways that maximize

the amount of time students are doing meaningful reading and writing tasks. Effective management skills include structuring activities and monitoring participation in these activities.

- Teachers who move through material at a pace that is brisk, while allowing a high level of understanding.

- Teachers who differentiate grouping schemes (whole class, small groups — teacher- and peer-directed, partner, and individual activities) according to the task and the level of the student.

- Teachers who adapt the materials for instructional and practice activities to the task and level of students.

Effective and comprehensive classroom reading programs require a commitment of all teachers, administrators, and parents. Students who are successful in learning to read will have better self-concepts and higher academic achievement in other areas.

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SPOTLIGHT ON READING

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Reading and the Non-English Speaking Student

Instructional Techniques
Classroom Activities

Reading is a vital basic skill that needs to be mastered if a good foundation for success in school and life pursuits is to be constructed. In today's complex society, it is imperative that adults be literate in order to function and to enable them to meet the challenges of the future. Reading is all around a child, in the home, in the school, and in the environment. He is exposed to reading at a very early age, however, formal reading instruction usually does not begin until he enters school. Educators should strive to make the acquisition of reading skills interesting, relevant, and enjoyable for all students. Reading improvement, like education in general, is a continuous lifelong pursuit. The various topics in the "Spotlight on Reading" series will be useful to you in the classroom as the goal to make all students successful avid lifelong readers is realized.

Non-English Speaking Students and Reading

Teachers who instruct non-English speaking students in the area of reading encounter special problems. These students have been taught their language in a different educational system and have learned different sounds, word structures, concepts, images, and ideas relevant to the native language.[1] The non-English speaking students must first learn to speak English before they can learn to read. The following suggestions will help you in working with the non-English speaking students to acquire oral language fluency.

- In learning to speak a second language, the non-English speaking student must master four different aspects of the new language: (1) to understand the spoken English; (2) to pronounce it correctly in order to be understood; (3) to be able to express it; and (4) to be able to express it correctly.

- Learning to pronounce words or sentences in a new language involves learning to hear it in terms of its own sound system (instead of the sound system of the non-English speaking students' native language) and learning to produce the proper sound to be understood.

- The non-English speaking student will usually have difficulty with the English pronunciation. Do not correct every pronunciation mistake your student makes; focus on one pronunciation problem per lesson to two. Praise and encourage the student often on his English pronunciation.

- To learn the structure of a new language, a student has to learn

how to link words together in sentences. Non-English speaking students will have difficulty with English sentences if their native language structure is different from English, such as the plural forms, various suffixes and endings, tenses, question form, negative form, etc.

- The non-English speaking student needs many opportunities to interact with peers. The student will develop oral language fluency faster if exposed to the different types or styles of the English language. For example, slang terms used on the playground, etc.[2]

Activities to promote reading skill improvement

- Encourage the non-English speaking student to speak in English as often as possible.

- Provide extra tutoring when the non-English speaking student is instructed in the content areas.

- Emphasize listening and speaking activities in your lessons, such as plays, puppet shows.

- Give detailed directions and provide concrete examples when instructing the non-English speaking student.

- Use a variety of visual aids, such as films, movies, games, charts, flash cards, etc.

- Develop learning centers in your classroom where the non-English speaking students can work on specific skills with peers.

- Have the students cut pictures from old basal readers or magazines to use in preparing a picture dictionary. Print the name of the object, etc., beside the picture in English and in the student's native language.

- Place a picture of an object, animal, etc. on a flash card — have the student identify the name of the object, etc. in English. Other students can help with this activity at a learning center.

- Place vocabulary words in English on an index card and on the reverse side of the card place the word in the student's native language.

- Have the non-English speaking students tell or write a story to a wordless book, writing in their native language and then translating the story to English.

- Have students read orally in pairs. A good reader can read orally to the non-English speaking student while following the written text. This activity would allow practice in word recognition and pronunciation.

- Take field trips to help the non-English speaking students acquire new information and experiences needed for reading comprehension.

- Invite resource persons to your classroom to give firsthand information on relevant topics.

- Provide opportunities for the non-English speaking students to write stories in English about their culture or past experiences.

- Place talking books, such as Bill Martin taped books, at a listening center for the non-English speaking student to use.

- Prepare tapes that reinforce or provide practice in the phonetic skills. The non-English speaking student can listen to the sounds of vowel, consonants, etc. and then repeat the sounds.

- Teach other students several words from the non-English speaking students' language.

- Have students read about the countries where the non-English speaking student/s lived.

Teaching reading to the non-English speaking students can be very rewarding and satisfying. Special attention needs to be given to providing a vast amount of visual activities and helping the students to place names and concepts with the visual representations. The non-English speaking students may be very knowledgeable in their own language or they may be lacking the basic skills in their own language. The students who already have the basic skill knowledge of their own language will learn much faster and be more confident in the new environment. Great patience is needed in teaching the non-English speaking students, remember they want to learn and they can learn.

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[1]*Teaching Reading to the Non-English Speakers*, Eleanor Thonis, Collier Macmillan International, Inc. New York: 1977

[2]*Handbook for Teachers of Vietnamese Refugee Students*, Jack Witknowsky Illinois Office of Education, November 1977

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Informal Diagnosis of Reading Problems in the Classroom

Informal diagnosis by the teacher covers a wide range of techniques for assessing reading problems. Learn to "read" the student and the signals he/she sends. A sensitive teacher can accurately predict reading success or failure by observing a student's behavior with language and books. Such diagnoses do not occur at designated test times, but are continuous throughout the school year. Informal reading inventories provide a statistical measure; however, attention to the following questions may prove insightful to teachers who are eager to eliminate barriers to a student's reading progress.

Pre-reading

- Is there sustained listening?
- Can a book provide browsing interest?
- Are picture books talked about?
- Is there a sense of story?
- Is there curiosity about many things?
- Is there sufficient background vocabulary to provide a complete understanding of the material?
- Is staying on a task a problem?

Word Recognition and Fluency

- Is there self-correction?
- Is reading a word-by-word process?
- Are basic sight words recognized?
- How are words positioned in written sentences?
- Are words stumbled over without actual pronounciation?
- Are reading assignments in content areas done in allotted time?

Comprehension

- Is context used to obtain meaning?
- Are inferences made beyond the literal level?
- Are oral and written directions followed accurately?
- Are pauses in oral reading appropriate to the context?
- Are discussion ideas remembered from day to day?
- Are questions asked to assist with meaning?

Attitude and Motivation

- What are nonverbal behaviors during oral and silent reading?
- Is the library an enjoyable experience?
- Is there interest in content area reading?
- Is there participation in discussion?
- Is reading done voluntarily during free time?

Directing attention to the establisment of positive responses to these questions for each student is a crucial role of instruction. Focusing on the improvement of written expression including spelling, emphasizing speaking to communicate, and increasing listening power will work together to noticeably improve reading behavior. The fact will be verified through continuous, informal diagnosis.

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SPOTLIGHT ON READING

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Components of a Comprehensive Reading Lesson

Instructional Techniques
Classroom Activities

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Components of a Comprehensive Reading Lesson

A comprehensive reading lesson should include a *pre-reading session,* a *during-reading session,* and a *post-reading session.* Studies show that the pre-reading session is often done poorly or completely omitted by many teachers. The pre-reading session is very important since it sets the tone for the entire reading lesson. Students' prior knowledge is assessed; misconceptions are discussed and clarified. Vocabulary is identified and a purpose for reading is given. In the during-reading session, teachers guide students in using study skills such as asking questions about the text while they read, paraphrasing the text and selecting the most relevant material to remember. The post-reading session is vital to the understanding and application of the new information. Students evaluate, summarize, and learn to apply their new knowledge to new situations. A complete lesson in a basal reader or in the content area should include each of these important components.

Pre-reading Activities and Techniques

- Have a brainstorming session with members of the class or group to assess their background knowledge. If general knowledge is lacking, then you need to provide the information through using resource persons, films, or assigning appropriate reading material.

- Give the students a purpose to read. Guide the students in making predictions about the story to be studied. The teacher can write the class predictions on the chalkboard or each student can write the predictions on paper. Lower primary students may have to dictate their predictions to a classroom assistant or an older student.

- Introduce new vocabulary. It is important that students understand the meaning of all new words. The specialized vocabulary used in the content area books often need to be introduced by the conceptual approach. The other method that is effective to use is the contextual approach.

  Conceptual Approach — 1. Give students the meaning of the word, 2. Establish a link between the new word and familiar experiences of the students, 3. Establish the features of the word by using examples and non-examples, 4. Apply the word in a variety of contexts, or 5. Make a semantic map of the word.

  Contextual Approach — Help the students to use the context of the text to acquire the meaning of the new words. The teacher can model how to use the words around a new word to find its meaning.

- Students can be given questions in advance of the reading assignment. The questions will help the students to focus their attention on specific or relevant information.

- Give the students a study guide. This can be a list of true or false statements related to the reading assignment. Direct the students to mark the questions with a T or F as they locate the answer in the text. These questions can also be utilized during the post-reading session to facilitate discussion.

- Have a class discussion about the subject or concept being introduced.

During the Reading Activities and Techniques

- Give the students directions for the reading assignment.

- Encourage the students to develop new ideas while reading.

- Help students to ask questions about the text while reading.

- Model for the students how to paraphrase sentences and paragraphs from the text.

- Have students stop while reading and make mental pictures of the setting, the scene, or visualize how a character may look, etc. The students can even draw pictures of how these various story components may look.

- Direct students to place any unknown vocabulary in a vocabulary notebook. Have them look up the definition or ask you the meaning of unknown words. This notebook can be used for future

reference. The definitions in the notebooks should be written in the students' own words.

- Have students select the main ideas of the text being read. These ideas can be underlined, highlighted, or written on paper. If underlining or highlighting is desired, place a sheet of clear plastic over the book for protection.

Post-reading Activities and Techniques

- Have students make final evaluations of their pre-reading predictions.

- Conduct a class discussion to identify or to answer any student questions (this will fill in gaps between their past experience and new information received).

- Let the students write possible test questions from the text.

- Have students write different endings to a story or event.

- Encourage students to make a drama presentation of the text. History events are very exciting when dramatized.

- Guide students in selecting a character from the story and write a diary from the character's point of view.

- Discuss with the students how the new knowledge will help them in future situations.

Students who are guided through the pre-reading, reading assignment, and the post-reading lesson will have improved vocabulary, improved comprehension, and a holistic understanding of the reading process.

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Games in the Reading Program

If students are tc really enjoy reading, you must keep it exciting by providing a variety of activities, materials, experiences, books, and games. Be enthusiastic about reading. Illustrate what a dull life it would be if we could not read. Express the need of this fundamental element of learning, reading. Keep reading a top priority in a student's life.

Reading is a fun activity. To make it even more enjoyable, you can develop reinforcement techniques for reading into games. Most students have weaknesses and often extra drill application of knowledge and encouragement are needed to help students overcome weaknesses. Students will often balk when they have to review an area in which they know they are not successful. By developing games you can help remediate students' weaknesses in reading. Students will be helped and at the same time have fun.

Games are versatile, as they can be used in all subject areas. Adaptable and prescriptive games can be developed with little or no effort. The following games encourage students to think, analyze, interpret, classify, and make decisions by applying knowledge, experiences, abilities, and skills. Games do have a legitimate purpose in a reading program.

"Finger-licken" Pudding Relays:

Purpose: To develop auditory and visual-motor skills, tactile and olfactory (sense of smell) perceptions, letter, sound-symbol associations, to recognize words and sounds, and to discover the

enjoyment of working with eatable substances. To think faster, react and act. The children try to beat their own times and to become more proficient in recognition of letters, sounds, and words. The students can be divided into teams. All students are winners because they will learn.

Materials: three small or two large boxes of chocolate instant pudding, two quart pitcher, water, and fingerpainting or butcher paper.

Directions: Students are given a large sheet of paper and approximately 1/2 cup of mixed pudding that has been prepared by students reading and following the box's directions except for substituting water for the milk.

With freshly washed hands, students spread the pudding around evenly on the paper. Letters are read and students write the letter given in their pudding using their pointing finger. When the students are correct, they get two licks, if incorrect, they get one and are shown how to make the letter before receiving another lick. Between each given letter students spread the pudding evenly.

Write the letters on the chalkboard afterwards to allow students to check their work. After giving letters, give words that require students to identify the beginning, medial, and ending consonants. Practice blends, vowels, diagraphs, diphthongs, spelling words, handwriting assignments, and math facts in pudding. Use positional words when giving letters and words. For instance: "Please make a line in the middle of the paper; place the beginning consonant of ball above the line and the beginning consonant of goat below the line."

Flash Card Fun

Purpose: To reinforce association of sound and letter and word recognition. To reinforce visual, auditory, and tactile perception skills. To develop eye-hand coordination skills and expression.

Materials: Paper pie plates; red, orange, yellow, purple, or green markers; Elmer's glue; dry gelatin to match the marker's color. (Glitter can be used but gelatin smells better.)

Directions: Print the needed letters, words, or sound combinations on the face of the pie plate with a marker. It is best to match colors of the marker and gelatin's flavor. Like: green goes with lime, red goes with strawberry or cherry. Trace the letter or letters with glue and sprinkle with dry gelatin. Allow to dry thoroughly. Make a small mark or symbol at the top of the plates.

Present the plates first as teaching aids. Students learn the letters sounds, and words by reviewing via seeing, hearing, and feeling the letters. Review can be done by using the plates as flash cards in a game of "Get Them." Turn over the cards and flip the plates. The first student who recognizes and says the sound, letter, or word gets the plate. The one with the most plates will win, but also will be the "flipper." This allows all students to apply their skills. Students use this game idependently or in a small group.

Words written on the plates can be used in a pantomime game. A student reads the word, acts it out, and the other students try to guess the word. Students are allowed to select their own words to act out. The student who guesses the word will pantomime. Use small groups in order for more children to participate. It is great for expression without saying a word.

You can use these fun plates as "Frisbees." Play this game in a gymnasium or outside on the grass. The plates do not necessarily need the jello, but since they are already prepared, use them. Throw the plates like a "Frisbee" to a small group of children. After catching the plate, the student gives the letter, a word that begins with the letter, and uses it in a sentence. After ten throws, the student with the most plates will be the thrower. A better student is giving other students a chance to succeed. Adapt the game to specific needs, skills, and abilities of students. It is a fun outside activity for a beautiful spring or autumn day.

Graphing Games

Purposes: To introduce a graph, to be able to use a graph by following directions, to label, read, and prepare with vertical and horizontal axes. To integrate graphs with other subject areas. To tally, categorize, and classify information. To recognize, review and apply sounds, letters, and words. To write and read directions.

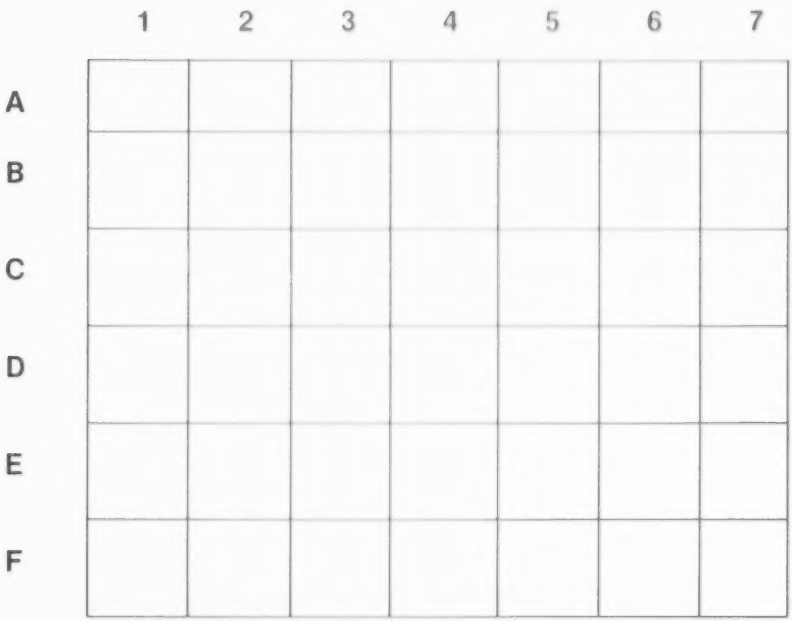
Materials: Graph paper, pencils, or crayons

Directions: Make a graph form. Put letters or words horizontally and numbers vertically on the borders of the graph. Dictate either letters or words and have students place the letters or words in the designated boxes. For instance, "Please put the letter 'b' in box 'A-2'." Students place their fingers on the rows of A and 2. They proceed in a straight line and place the letter 'b' in the correct box. Letters or words are given in order to fill all the boxes in the graph. It is fun to find the correct boxes and write the letters or words. Help all who need it.

After preparing a graph with letters or words, collect and return at a later date along with candy corn or tokens. This game is like Bingo. Words are given orally by the teacher and the students find the letter that the word begins with and place their candy corn or tokens. Anyone who fills all boxes first either vertically, horizontally, or diagonally will win.

Graphs are versatile and adaptable. All reading and language arts activities can be used. Also, vocabulary words in any subject area, classification, story problems, and recognition of factual information can be used in a fun and exciting manner. Use a plain graph and give the following either orally or written: Please place the name of the animal that is known as "the king of beasts," in D-4. Another: If I had twelve sheep, three dogs and two plants, how many animals would I have altogether? Please put your answer in C-8. The directions can be written and put in a container and children can draw the directions from the container either independently or with other students.

The objective is to be able to complete a row or the page. Students really enjoy this game. Have it as a daily classroom activity by changing the directions. Students strengthen reading, listening, thinking, verbal, and writing skills by applying knowledge in this game. It is a fun way to learn.



Games have a place in today's reading program. They encourage students to stop, think, listen, read, and apply their knowledge and skills. Games can be made to fit and be useful in any reading program regardless of ability or level. Games also are excellent for prescriptive lessons. Students with specific problems will relate better to games than to a worksheet or drill. Therefore, by knowing and understanding the students, the teacher can help them help themselves by teaching reading via encouragement, enthusiasm, exciting books, materials, experiences, activities, and games.

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Creative Alternatives to Ditto Sheets

Instructional Techniques
Classroom Activities

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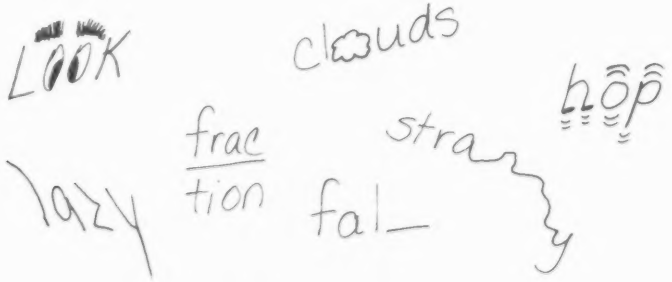
Creative Alternatives to Ditto Sheets

There are many creative alternatives to using drill and skill ditto masters and worksheets. Since there are also many different modalities of learning, including auditory, visual, kinesthetic, and combinations of these, it is essential to include varied learning approaches to your reading curriculum.

Creative writing and creative thinking lessons can replace the dull, daily ditto drill with spark and spirit.

Wordpix

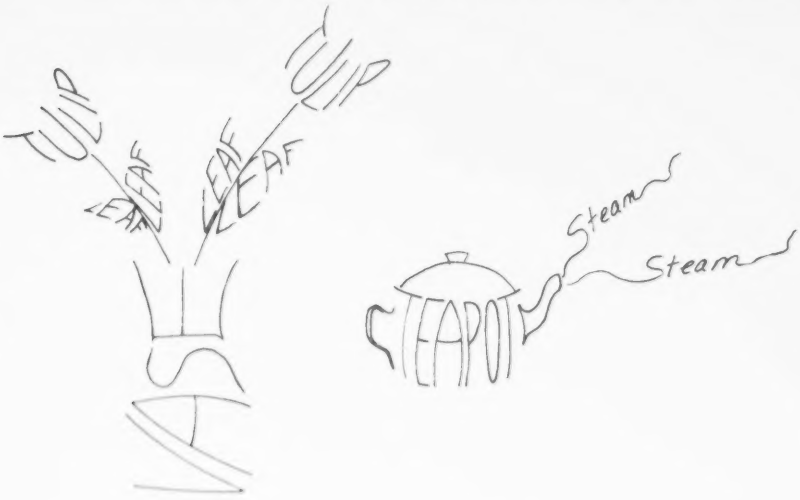
- Wordpix are words that are written and illustrated to show the literal meanings of the words.



Students could draw wordpix on file cards, a large piece of poster board, the blackboard, or in their own individual books.

Concrete Poetry

- Concrete poetry goes a step beyond wordpix. This time students use words and pictures to express several different ideas.



Symbol Stories

- Symbol stories are poems, paragraphs, or short stories in which main ideas, objects or characters are illustrated with simple symbols as the story is written out. Younger children might wish to stick with familiar rhymes or songs. Older children could create original stories, or expand upon stories and poems which are familiar to them.

Sounds Lesson

- Ask your students to keep a list of all the sounds they hear from the time they get up in the morning, until they close the door to leave for school — the sizzling sound of bacon frying, the gargling sound of someone brushing teeth, the pop-up sound of a toaster, and so forth. With the list of sounds, ask your students to write a story about what they hear and from where the sounds come.

A fun follow-up activity is to create an orchestra of sounds with five or six students. Choose an orchestra leader to begin and end the sound at the appropriate time, while the reader reads sound story. The "orchestra" can "sizzle," "gargle," and "pop," as background accompaniment to the story. Stories and background sounds could be audio taped.

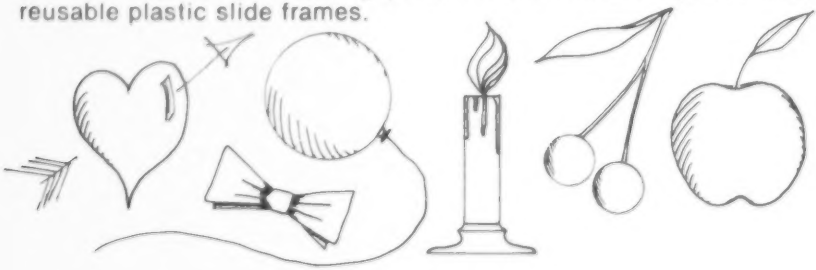
Color Poem Lesson

- Using the book *Hailstones and Halibut Bones*, by Mary O'Neill as a guide, share several of the adventures in color selections with your class first, then ask your students to choose their favorite colors and make lists of 15-20 things that pertain to that color. From their lists, they choose their favorite phrases and incorporate them into rhyming or non-rhyming poems.

Sample:

Red is an apple that grows on a tree,
A ribbon in your hair, a balloon in the air.

Now, create a slide show to accompany the reading or audio tape of the color poems. Cut small squares of acetate from transparency films. Have the children draw objects of the favorite color on the film with permanent marking pens. Fit the acetate squares into reusable plastic slide frames.



Ad Writing Lesson

- Ask students to think up a product name using their own name as an alliteration. Example: Diedre Denene's Detergent. They write product advertisements including information such as weight con-

tents, ingredients, operating instructions, suggestions for use, and other pertinent information. Ask students to bring in discarded cereal boxes, liter plastic pop bottles, and cans. Children then design an attractive and informative label for the container. The label must encourage the consumer to purchase that product, rather than another brand.

Students need a variety of challenging and creative activities in the classroom to stimulate interest in reading. Students will look forward with great anticipation to the days that special activities are scheduled. Everyone will enjoy a break from routine classroom worksheet assignments — be creative and make reading time a thinking time.

Sources for Ideas

Ideas 1, 2, 3
The Good Apple Creative Writing Book, Gary Grimm, and Don Mitchell, Good Apple Inc., Box 299, Carthage, IL 62321

Idea 4
Not Just Schoolwork — New Directions in Written Expression, Mandala Press, P.O. Box 796, Amherest, Maine 01002

Idea 5
Hailstones and Halibut Bones, Mary O'Neill, Doubleday and Company, Inc., Garden City, New York

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SPOTLIGHT ON READING

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Reading in the Content Area

As students enter into the later primary grades and intermediate grades they spend a majority of their time reading assignments in the content areas. Reading assignments in science, math, literature, social studies, etc., require students to use special reading skills for the study of content. Content area teachers must teach and reinforce reading skills if indepth learning and meaningful comprehension is to occur. The content area books are (1) often written above the designated grade readability level, (2) vocabulary is technical in nature, (3) concept density per page is high, and (4) the text is presented in a very straight forward style with very little narrative. Students often experience reading and comprehension difficulties due to their own lack of appropriate background experiences, poor reading skills, poor motivation, and low interest in the subject area. Teachers can help students to overcome these obstacles by guiding students to recognize the organizational pattern of each textbook being used and to identify the aids which the author provides to assist them in reading and learning. Attention should be given to these skills when students approach each new content textbook, as organizational patterns and aids will differ with each author. However, the following is a common structure found in many expository textbook materials.

- *Simple-Listening:* A listing of items or ideas where the order of presentation of the items is not significant.

- *Comparison/Contrast:* A description of similarities and differences between two or more things.

- *Temporal Sequence:* A sequential relationship between ideas or

relationship between ideas or events considered in terms of the passage of time.

- *Cause/Effect:* An interaction between at least two ideas or events, one considered a cause or reason and the other an effect or result. (A subset of the Cause/Effect category is the Problem/Solution category. It is similar to the Cause/Effect category in that two factors interact, but in this case one is a problem and the other is a solution to that problem.)

(Adapted from Bonnie B. Armbruster (1984.) The problem of "inconsiderate text." In G. G. Duffy, L. R. Roehler, & J. Mason (Eds.), *Comprehension instruction: Perspectives and suggestions* (pp. 202-217). New York: Longman.

Teachers will find the following suggestions and activities helpful when working with students in the content areas:

Survey the textbook as a whole

Title of the book

- What do you think this book will be about?

- What do you know about this subject from your own reading or previous study?

Table of Contents

- What kind of information can you find here?

Chapter titles

- Briefly identify the chapter titles.

Supplementary aids

- Are there lists of maps, graphs, or charts? How can these be used?

- Is there a glossary? How can this be used?

Index

- How does this differ from the Table of Contents?

- How can this be used when studying?

Survey the individual chapter

Chapter title

- From the title, what do you think this chapter will be about?
- What do you already know about this subject?

Introductory section

- Does the author give an introductory section or paragraph?
- From this section, what purposes can you set for your reading of this chapter?
- The teacher should read this section aloud so that the poorer readers will benefit.

Chapter divisions

- Large section headings
  - What are the major points or areas the author is going to investigate in this chapter?
  - State these in the form of purposes for reading each section.
- Small section headings
  - These further subdivide the major sections.
  - Turn these headings into questions to set a purpose for reading.
  - The teacher will need to lead students into additional question words (introduce the "wh" words plus "how") and verbs to the headings to form questions.

Visual aids

- What types of visual aids has the author provided?
- How can you use these aids when studying?

Questions

- Where in the chapter has the author provided questions (usually at the end, but often elsewhere, too, such as at the end of sections or under pictures)?
- These questions may be read before the selection to give a purpose for reading.

Summary

- Has the author provided a summary at the end of the chapter?

- How can reading this during your survey help set your purposes for reading?

- The teacher should read this summary aloud, again, to help the poorer readers. If the end of the chapter does not act as a summary, this step should not be included.

Vocabulary

- How does the author alert you to important vocabulary words? (italicized or in bold type)

Students should learn to use context clues to determine the meaning of the technical vocabulary. Authors use the various forms when introducing new words. They include:

- Formal definition
- Definition by example
- Definition by description
- Definition by comparison and contrast
- Definition by synonyms and antonyms
- Definition by opposition
- Definition by origin.

- Taken from Edgar Dale, Joseph O'Rourke, and Henry Bamman, *Techniques of Teaching Vocabulary* (Palo Alto: Field Publications, Inc. 1971, p. 9)

Activites to use in the content areas

- Assemble a list of words which are important to the students' success in each content area. Provide a definition for them or help them in finding the meanings.

Terms and phases can be organized within a content area by grouping them under the concepts to be studied.

- Direct students to look at given visual aids and have them volunteer to tell what information it provides.

- Encourage students to use mental imagery during the reading assignment in the content areas, especially in social studies, and literature.

Content area learning can be very exciting for students, but it can also present many challenges. When teaching students in the content areas, use a variety of techniques and activities. If good comprehension is to occur, students must be motivated and carefully guided through each lesson. (For additional ideas, consult the *Comprehension I, II,* and *III* and the *Vocabulary I* and *II* pamphlets in the Spotlight on Reading Series.)

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SPOTLIGHT ON READING

Reading Comprehension I Study Techniques

Instructional Techniques
Classroom Activities

Reading is a vital basic skill that needs to be mastered if a good foundation for success in school and life pursuits is to be constructed. In today's complex society, it is imperative that adults be literate in order to function and to enable them to meet the challenges of the future. Reading is all around a child, in the home, in the school, and in the environment. He is exposed to reading at a very early age, however, formal reading instruction usually does not begin until he enters school. Educators should strive to make the acquisition of reading skills interesting, relevant, and enjoyable for all students. Reading improvement, like education in general, is a continuous lifelong pursuit. The various topics in the "Spotlight on Reading" series will be useful to you in the classroom as the goal to make all students successful avid lifelong readers is realized.

Comprehension I: Study Techniques

Comprehension is a very complex process. A reader is required to use many skills and strategies if optimum comprehension is to be achieved. Students must actively be taught how to employ the most effective strategies. Many of these strategies will enable them to interact with the written text while monitoring their own learning.

Some effective reading strategies are:

Metacognitive Skills

- Previewing — preview the text, including headings, subheadings, end of chapter questions, and new vocabulary. Make a semantic map of the subject to assess students' prior knowledge.

- Self-questioning — students pose questions about the text during the reading process.

- Use context and structural clues for word meanings. Authors use various techniques to signal new vocabulary words. (See *Reading in The Content Area* pamphlet for details.)

- Adjust reading speed to difficulty of material and/or purpose for reading. Students need to be reminded that usually a slower reading rate is needed when reading for optimum comprehension.

- Making predictions about the text, confirming or rejecting the predictions, revising and predicting again.

- Placing the problem "on hold" and reading on for some information. If the student does not understand something read or finds a

contradiction, they can wait until further reading has been completed before resolving the problem.

- Going to another, perhaps easier, text source.

- Paraphrasing — students read to determine content meaning, and put the text material into their own words.

- Looking for important ideas.

- Summarize material read. This can be done orally as a class or individually in writing. This is a way to integrate material read.

- Skim text material.

- Scan text material.

- Take notes as students read.

- Highlight important material. Plastic overlays may be used in rental textbooks.

- Underline important material. Plastic overlays may be used in rented textbooks.

The following techniques will help the student in organizing the material to be read.

- Prepare students to organize their thinking when approaching an assignment by helping them set purposes for reading.

- Encourage students to develop a study method, such as previewing or SQ3R (Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review), which is satisfactory for them.

- Demonstrate the organization of ideas to students by providing a study guide of sequential questions or a partially completed outline. The latter might provide major headings, allowing students to fill in the important details as they study.

- Use directed oral rereading during class discussions to note the author's organization of ideas.

- Assist students in learning to differentiate between important details which need to be remembered and those which are supportive, but need not be emphasized. This can be done during class discussions by posing a question and having students scan a section of the text, choosing the important details needed.

- If students are expected to take notes in class, discuss various methods of note taking. This can include formal outlining using sentences or phrases and indenting for subordinate ideas. Allow a few minutes at the end of the lecture for students to review and clarify their notes.

- Teach students to summarize. During class discussions, students can be asked to read an important section and volunteer a summary of the author's ideas in their own words.

- Give students suggestions in note taking during studying. Have students discuss their methods. Point out the value of underlining in the text if students purchase their own books.

Students need to be informed of the many effective strategies that they may use to achieve better comprehension. When students are guided in the use of the strategies, they are able to understand the material in-depth by employing higher order thinking and reading skills.

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SPOTLIGHT ON READING

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Comprehension II
Semantic and Story Mapping

Semantic mapping is a strategy for developing, activating, and organizing background knowledge about a topic. Semantic maps display words, ideas, or concepts in categories and indicate how words relate to one another. Semantic maps assist students in linking their existing knowledge to a new idea.

Steps in constructing a semantic map

Step 1 A topic can be introduced in one of two ways:

a. Once the topic has been stated (e.g., what can you buy at a grocery store), a brainstorming session ensues, with students quickly listing what comes to mind. When a sizable group of words and phrases has been generated, students can be asked to identify categories for clustering the words.

b. After the topic has been stated, students can be asked to identify categories and these can be written around the central word or phrase.

Step 2 When students have exhausted their knowledge about the topic, they can be asked to develop questions about gaps in the knowledge of the topic (as indicated by the semantic map). These questions can be written down, on the board or by students individually or in pairs.

Step 3 Have students read the text, searching for answers to their

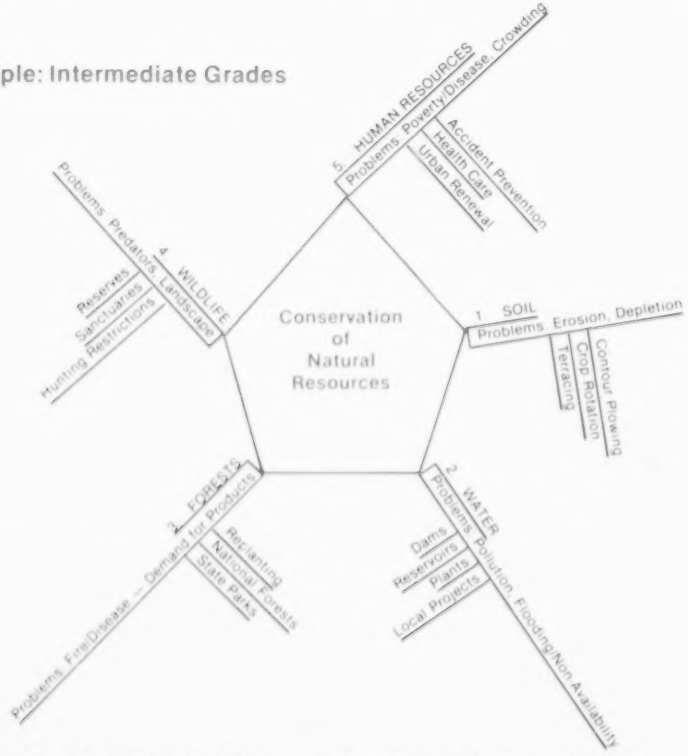
questions and also new ideas.

Step 4 Semantic maps should be examined from the perspective of the information that has been gained from reading. When necessary, maps should be reorganized to better illustrate relationships among items.

Note Students who have had experience with teacher-led semantic mapping should be encouraged to develop maps on their own. Maps generated by different students on the same text or topic can be compared during group discussions. Students and teachers should approach this activity from the stance that a set of ideas can be organized in a variety of ways. Semantic mapping provides an excellent alternative to note taking or outlining.

Semantic mapping has proven to be a valuable activity for students ranging from first grade to college. Semantic mapping has also been used in different text types, ranging from stories to expository text.

Example: Intermediate Grades



Example of a Semantic Map — Intermediate-Level Students

Example: Primary Grades

Example of a Semantic Map — Primary-Level Students

In the area of literature, the knowledge of the structure of stories is helpful to students.

Components of a Story

Setting	The main character (or characters) is introduced; the time and place of the story may be described.
Problem	Most stories involve a character's (characters) attempts to solve problems.
Goal	In most stories, the character (co-characters) has a goal aimed at alleviating the problem.
Set of attempts to achieve the goal	These attempts are often called the "events" of a story.
Resolution	Generally, the resolution consists of the character (characters) achieving the goal and alleviation of the problem.

From P.D. Pearson (1982). Asking questions about stories. Ginn Occasional Papers: Writings in Reading and Language Arts, 15. Lexington, VA: Ginn and Company

Teachers find the use of story frames to aid the student in comprehending a story very effective. Following is an example of a commonly used story frame.

Example: Story Frame

The story takes place _____.

_____ is a character in the story

who _____

_____.

A problem occurs when _____

_____. After that, _____

and _____.

The problem is solved when _____

_____. The story ends with _____

_____.

For other examples of, and information about, story frames, see G. L. Fowler (1982). Developing comprehension skills in primary students through the use of story frames. *The Reading Teacher, 35,* pp.176-179.

Study skills are developmental in nature, paralleling the development of all other skills and facilitating the acquisition of knowledge in all areas of study. Regular practice, consistent reinforcement, through specific attention to their application in each context, will help students recognize their importance and be motivated to master their application.

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SPOTLIGHT ON READING

Reading Comprehension III Discussion and Questioning Techniques

Instructional Techniques
Classroom Activities

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Comprehension III
Discussion and Question Techniques

Discussion

Formal discussions serve many instructional purposes in the classroom. Effective discussion skills will be used extensively by students during their school years and successes in the professional world may depend on their ability to communicate orally in formal and informal situations. When students are given opportunities to practice their discussion skills, they: (1) develop better listening skills, (2) acquire oral language fluency, (3) use higher level thinking skills, (4) learn to accept the ideas and opinions of others, (5) are able to share their ideas with peers, (6) improve their comprehension ability and (7) develop and practice effective interpersonal skills.

Teachers can prepare students to be competent participants in discussion groups by providing sufficient practice opportunities and by setting discussion rules. Roles for discussion groups need to be established and followed if orderly discussions are to occur. Students should be encouraged to:

- listen attentively to others.
- address relevant points and not stray from the main topic.
- avoid interrupting the speaker.
- avoid not criticizing or ridiculing other's ideas. However,

students may express their opposing opinions if done in a courteous manner.

- be well informed about the topic of discussion.

Both small group and whole class discussions can be productive, and if practiced on a regular basis, will be an exciting and meaningful part of your reading program.

Questioning

The measurement of students' comprehension often depends on how well they answer questions posed by the teacher. Studies indicate that a majority of the questions asked require a student to simply recall factual information. If students are to develop higher order thinking skills, then they must have practice in responding to higher level questions.

The following suggestions will help in developing questions for daily use in the classroom.

- Develop questions that go beyond the simple recall/knowledge level.

- Use textbooks as a guide in selecting priority topics to be assessed throughout the range of thinking skill categories. This will assure a match between what content is taught and what is tested.

- Carefully evaluate the assessments that often accompany textbooks. Even though they come from the textbook publisher, they may not match the cognitive categories covered in the text or covered in your instruction in class. If they don't match, either adapt and improve them, or use your own assessments.

- Develop questions that encourage creative thought. This provides students elbow room-opportunities for answers that might not be quite so common or usual. Divergent thought develops the following, which are the basis for creative thinking:
  - Flexibility of ideas
  - Fluency of ideas
  - Spontaneity
  - Uniqueness

- Teach your students the different categories of thinking skills. Post the categories and key words prominently in the classroom so you and your students can refer to them during discussion.

- Involve students in the process of brainstorming questions at different levels for their own tests. One person's thought may stimulate ideas in another's mind. A new question is developed. This concept, called hitchhiking, will help students internalize the levels, and it will save you test development time.

- Get together with other teachers who are using the same text or teaching the same unit to brainstorm questions.

- Ask students what they would like to know about a new, upcoming subject. This activity will allow the students to become actively involved in the unit and to better understand its purpose.

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If more meaningful questioning is to take place, the range and types of questions asked must be expanded. The first key to expanding the range of questions you can pose is to focus on the key or action verb used to describe the problem to the students. Start with the following ones and add your own:

If you want to measure:	**Use these key words in the exercise**	
Recall	define	repeat
	identify	what
	label	when
	list	who
	name	
Analysis	subdivide	categorize
	break down	sort
	separate	
Comparison	compare	differentiate
	contrast	distinguish
Inference	deduce	anticipate
	predict	what if
	infer	apply
	speculate	conclude
Evaluation	evaluate	argue
	judge	recommend
	assess	debate
	appraise	why
	defend	critique

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Additional Suggestions:

- Allow students ample "wait time" after posing a question. When students are given at least five seconds to respond after a question is asked, their responses are more detailed and longer in length.

- Avoid asking questions that can be answered with a "yes" or "no."

- Provide students with opportunities to summarize or rephrase answers other students have given.

- Allow students the opportunity to fully explain their answers if the first response is not exactly correct.

- Pose questions which do not call for one "right" answer.

An effective reading program must provide many opportunities for students to discuss material read. Good questions asked by the teacher will enhance students' comprehension and lead to their becoming critical thinkers.

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Worksheet Selection Tips

In many classrooms across the state, students spend a majority of the reading period completing worksheets. These worksheets usually come from (1) the basal reading program, (2) ancillary worksheet books, or (3) are prepared by the teacher. Research shows that many worksheet activities require only limited amount of reading and/or writing. Students often are directed to simply draw a line, put a mark in a box, etc., but very little application and real reading is taking place. For students to become good readers, they must be actively involved in the reading process and actually interacting with the written text. There are specific skills that can be reinforced through the use of worksheets. Teachers, however, need to be selective in the quality and quantity of worksheets assigned. Interesting learning activities and games can be substituted for worksheets as students' independent seatwork. Some of these activities include:

- Learning Centers

- Individual Student Folders — Each student can have his own work folder full of teacher-selected game ideas, writing activities, etc.

- Newspaper Activities — The newspaper can be used for the reinforcement of reading skills with little preparation and cost. For example, have the students select a newspaper page and circle all the nouns, verbs, etc. Have them read an article and write a brief summary. Contact your local newspaper for other related activities.

- Provide more time for silent reading and book sharing activities. (See *Students' Oral and Silent Reading in the Classroom* pamphlet.)

You can use your own creativity to develop many outstanding alternatives to worksheet assignments. (See *Creative Alternatives to Worksheets* pamphlet and *Games in the Reading Program* pamphlet.)

On occasion when a worksheet activity would be appropriate, the following self-questions created by Dixie Speigel will be helpful in the selection process. The following eight questions should be asked:

1 Have I taught the skills needed for this activity and are the children ready for independent practice? Workbooks and skill sheets are appropriate only for reinforcement after instruction. If children are asked to complete independent activities for which they have not been prepared, they will very likely experience failure.

2 Do the children actually need this practice? This is the reverse of a first question. If the children are already proficient in a skill or a strategy, their time should not be wasted in completing worksheets. Rather, the children could use this time to apply these skills in recreational or functional reading. If a teacher is not certain if an individual child needs workbook practice, a bargain may be struck. If the child can complete one half of the examples on the worksheet with 100 percent accuracy, then both the teacher and the child can feel relatively confident that no additional practice is needed. Such a bargain may motivate the child to give his or her best effort. It also saves grading time for the teacher!

3 Will completion of this activity lead to transfer of a skill or strategy to "real" reading? Many workbooks and skill sheets fragment reading into discrete skills, requiring the learner to focus on just one skill at a time. The practice exercises often use single words, brief phrases, or very short paragraphs. This is not real reading.

4 Do the children actually have to do any reading to complete the activity? This question is related to the previous question, because if there is little or no reading involved in the task, there is little to transfer to other reading situations. Unfortunately, many "reading" worksheets can be completed without reading. Children may be asked to "circle all of the re-, dis-, and un- prefixes" in a set of words. This is a visual discrimination task that requires no reading at all. Similarly, the task may be to select a "main idea" (actually just a topic) from four choices that are so different (a. cars, b. baseball, c. dogs, d. rutabagas) that often a simple visual match of key words will enable the children to choose the right answer.

Other activities are really spelling tasks rather than reading tasks. For example, the child sees a picture of a cat and is asked to fill in the missing letter in c__t. Activities such as these are not an effec-

tive use of student time.

5 Will completion of this activity enhance a love of reading or damage it? Workbooks and skill sheets that are tedious, fragmented, too difficult, too easy, or too numerous will not help the children learn to enjoy reading. Furthermore, it is possible that the children may come to think of reading as filling out worksheets in five-minute segments of time to fulfill the teacher's purposes.

6 Are there an appropriate number of items in the activity? Are there enough examples to make it worthwhile to purchase, duplicate, explain, and grade the activity? Are there so few items that a short attention span is reinforced and little practice is achieved? Are there so few items that fatigue and boredom set in?

7 Does it take more time to explain the activity to the children than for the children to complete it? This is often a problem with worksheets that require little reading and/or thinking or have too few items. By the time the teacher provides instruction and explains how to complete the sheet, using two or three examples from the page, there may be little left for the children to do. Conversely, the task may be so needlessly complex that understanding the directions themselves is the major cognitive task for the activity.

8 Am I assigning this workbook or skill sheet simply to keep the children busy? Unfortunately, worksheets are often used as a management technique — a device for keeping some students occupied so that the teacher can work with other children. Teachers must resist the temptation to fill up children's time with unneeded worksheets. If the children need to be kept busy, let them do free reading and composing. Let them practice putting all the skills of reading and writing together, rather than practice them in isolation.

From *Reading Today* (1986). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Worksheets do have a place in a good reading program if they are selected with care. Strive to create criteria for good worksheets (e.g., Does it require active reading and writing; is it correlated to the objects of the district or state?) Make every minute of reading instructions count by providing opportunities for students to be active participants in the reading process.

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15. Games in the Reading Program
16. Creative Alternatives to Ditto Sheets
17. Reading in the Content Areas
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19. Reading Comprehension II — Semantic and Story Mapping
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21. Worksheet Selection Tips
22. How to Include Parents in the Reading Program

Indiana Department of Education
Center for School Improvement and Performance
Office of School Assistance

SPOTLIGHT ON READING

22

How to Include Parents in the Reading Program

Instructional Techniques
Classroom Activities

Reading is a vital basic skill that needs to be mastered if a good foundation for success in school and life pursuits is to be constructed. In today's complex society, it is imperative that adults be literate in order to function and to enable them to meet the challenges of the future. Reading is all around a child, in the home, in the school, and in the environment. He is exposed to reading at a very early age, however, formal reading instruction usually does not begin until he enters school. Educators should strive to make the acquisition of reading skills interesting, relevant, and enjoyable for all students. Reading improvement, like education in general, is a continuous lifelong pursuit. The various topics in the "Spotlight on Reading" series will be useful to you in the classroom as the goal to make all students successful avid lifelong readers is realized.

How to Include Parents in the Reading Program

Reading is an exciting subject in which parents can be involved in helping their children. Parents want to help their children become better readers and better students, but often do not know what techniques or activities to use. There are many benefits to students, teachers and parents that can be realized by involving parents in the education of their children. The following are pre-reading and reading related activities or ideas that can be suggested to interested parents.

Parents can:

- take their children on trips or visit local museums, etc. to help them build a good experience background.
- encourage their children to ask questions and be inquisitive about their environment. For example, point out ordinary and/or unusual things while riding in a car or bus and discuss them with their children.
- take their children for walks around their neighborhood and observe various activities and scenes that can be discussed.
- make reading material available in the home, books, newspapers, magazines, etc.
- take their children to local libraries — make this a regular scheduled activity.

- have a daily family reading time when all family members read independently.

- read orally each day to their children.

- develop a home library for all family members to use.

- purchase books as birthday and Christmas gifts for their children. Suggest to relatives that they can also give books, magazines, subscriptions, etc. as gifts.

- encourage their children to read labels on cereal boxes and other food product containers. They can determine nutrients, vitamins, etc. of the foods.

- encourage their child to read about possible hobbies or other interests.

- help their children write letters to friends and relatives.

- hold discussions with their children after a good book has been read.

- have their children draw pictures about the story or about the main characters.

- have their children try to tell the order of events in a story.

- encourage their children to read for specific purposes, such as:
  - read menus in a restaurant
  - read signs in the city or while traveling on the highway
  - read want-ads for something that child would like to purchase
  - read recipes as the mother or father prepares a food dish

- have their children keep word books — the words can be collected from television, books, billboards, advertisements, etc. The children can even draw pictures of the words or cut pictures from old magazines to put beside the words. The word definitions should be written in the child's own words.

- have the children interview friends, neighbors, relatives, etc. and practice writing a summary of the interview.

Ideas for Teachers to Implement:

- suggest to parents how they can turn their home into a reading laboratory by placing labels on household objects. Put a card with

words like chair, table, door, etc. on the specific object.

- provide parents with reading games or activities that can be checked out and used with their children in the home.

- suggest ways parents can provide positive reinforcement with their children. (See Parent Insight pamphlet, *Praise Your Child.)*

- conduct parent workshops at the local level to introduce parents to simple instructional techniques they could use with their children. For example — flash cards, T-scopes, etc.

- provide parents with good bibliographies of books to read aloud to their children.

- suggest ways parents can use wordless and predictable books with their children to help them become interested in reading at an early age.

- establish a classroom library that can be used by parents. Parents could come after school to select books with their children to be read at home.

- suggest ways that parents can model the value of reading in everyday life to their children.

- hold a workshop or activity period during open house week to demonstrate to parents how children can write their own books and bind them attractively.

- show parents how children can write their own ABC books in the home.

- use reading incentive programs in your classroom that involve parents' participation. (*Reading Incentive Book* information is available by writing to the Indiana Department of Education, Office of School Assistance, Room 229, State House, Indianapolis, IN 46204-2798.)

- utilize ideas presented in the Indiana Department of Education, Office of School Assistance's *Parent Insight Series* pamphlets. For further information, write the above address.

- Involve other building staff in developing new ways parents can be involved in the reading development of their children.

If students are to become better readers and students, there must be a partnership between the home and school. Teachers can do

much to make parents feel welcome and needed in the education of their children. The students will benefit greatly, since they will receive the message that the home and school both value reading and education.

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